

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
OMB-01 AID-05 /071 W  
-----069232 111934Z /21

R 110915Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9258  
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBWNYSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2983

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT BG  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FIRST WEEK:  
RHETORIC OVER SUBSTANCE

1. THE OFFICIAL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS BARELY A WEEK OLD, BUT ALREADY THE TONE OF THE CAMPAIGN AND THE ROLES OF EACH MAJOR CONTENDER HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED. AFTER AN INITIAL DAY OR TWO OF RELATIVELY "STATESMANLIKE" MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS GROUPS AT BANGOBHAVEN, PRESIDENT ZIA HAS HIT THE HUSTINGS WITH VIGOR. HE HAS QUICKLY TAKEN THE OFFENSIVE, ASSOCIATING OSMANI WITH THE "ANWAI LEAGUE BAKSALITE KILLERS OF DEMOCRACY AND PLUNDERERS OF NATIONAL WEALTH." (COMMENT: IN FACT OSMANI RESIGNED FROM THE AWAMI LEAGUE AND PARLIAMENT IN OPPOSITION TO MUJIB, BUT HAS, OF COURSE, NOW BECOME THAT PARTY'S CANDIDATE.)  
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IN SPEECH AFTER SPEECH IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, ZIA HAS USED THE THEME THAT "THE PEOPLE WHO PLUNDERED NATIONAL WEALTH, KILLED THOUSANDS OF INNOCENT PEOPLE AND DEMOCRACY AS WELL, MUST GIVE ACCOUNT OF THEIR GUILTS TO THE PEOPLE."

2. IN TAKING THE OFFENSIVE, ZIA HAS QUICKLY TURNED THE CAMPAIGN INTO A CHOICE BETWEEN HIMSELF PERSONALLY AND THE

SUPPOSED ANARCHY AND PERFIDY OF THE ANWAMI LEAGUE GOVERNMENT OF MUJIB. ZIA HAS CALLED THE AWAMI LEAGUERS "ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE" AND HAS ALREADY SUGGESTED VAGUELY (AND PROBABLY INACCURATELY) THAT OSMANI AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE CREATED DISTURBANCES IN THE COUNTRY WITH THE INTENTION OF UNDERMINING THE ELECTIONS. ZIA'S "POLITICAL" ADVISORS ARE ALSO TOURING THE COUNTRY USING HARSH RHETORIC, OFTEN DESIGNED TO PICTURE OSMANI AS NOT ONLY A PUPPET OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE BUT A FORMER STOOGE OF INDIA. OSMANI HAS BEEN ACCUSED FOR INSTANCE OF "ALLOWING" THE INDIAN ARMY TO TAKE ARMS AND AMMUNITION FROM THE COUNTRY AFTER LIBERATION.

3. THE QUICKNESS AND DIRECTNESS OF ZIA'S ATTACK HAS PUT OSMANI ON THE DEFENSIVE AND APPARENTLY CREATED DISSENSION WITHIN HIS CAMP. OSMANI HAS CALLED FOR TOLERANCE IN NATIONAL POLITICS IN ORDER THAT A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY CAN BE POSSIBLE. IN CALLING FOR "SOBER AND DIGNIFIED" POLITICS, OSMANI HAS SAID THAT "ALLAH NEVER FORGIVES ANY 'WORD OF WEAPON.'" OSMANI'S SPEECHES DO NOT RECEIVE THE PROMINENT PRESS COVERAGE GIVEN TO ZIA'S SPEECHES AND OFTEN OSMANI'S RESPONSES TO ZIA'S CHALLENGES ARE PRINTED IN SMALLER TYPE NEAR THE BOTTOM OF PAGE ONE.

4. YESTERDAY (MAY 10) OSMANI WAS UNABLE TO HOLD A RALLY AT MIRPUR, A SUBURBAN AREA NORTH OF DACCA, AFTER REPORTED DISAGREEMENTS AMONG HIS ADVISORS OVER WHETHER TO PLACE A

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PORTRAIT OF MUJIB ON THE DAIS AND WHETHER TO PLAY A RECORDING OF A 1971 MUJIB SPEECH. THE MEETING WAS FINALLY CANCELLED AND OSMANI LOST A DAY OF CAMPAIGNING.

SCHNEIDER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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